

## **Effects of political conflict and terrorism on tourism: How crisis has challenged Turkey's tourism development**

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*This paper studies the influence of political conflict and terrorism on Turkey's tourism indicators and competitiveness. Turkey has been challenged by political conflict, and several associated terrorist attacks in recent years. Consequently, the risks involved in visiting one of the world's top tourism destinations, Turkey, have increased. Crisis has challenged the country's competitiveness and share in world tourism as a top tourist destination. Studies on the effects of this on tourism have shown that conflict has a significant, negative impact on a region's tourism industry. The aim of this article is to analyze the effects of the crisis in Turkey on its tourism development. The study provides a descriptive analysis of the economic and tourism indicators of Turkey over the period from 2002 to 2015. The terrorism index was used to test its relationship with the changes in other economic and tourism indicators. The results show that there is a strong relationship between the changes in the terrorism index and overall tourism growth rates. Political conflict and terrorism have an adverse effect on Turkish tourism development.*

*Keywords: Conflict-Ridden Areas, Terrorism Index, Tourism Growth Trends, Crisis, Tourism in Turkey*

### **1. Introduction**

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, comprising 1,186 billion international tourists in the world, and accounting for almost 10% of World GDP with its estimated US\$ 1260 billion in total earnings worldwide in 2015 (UNWTO 2016). Tourism plays a more significant role in the economies of some countries than others, wherever the industry contributes to a great proportion to their respective economy and labor market. Turkey has long held a leading position among the world's top tourism destinations, for instance, being the 6th most visited country by international tourists, with 39.5 million tourist arrivals in 2015 (UNWTO 2016). However, tourism should also be considered one of the most vulnerable sectors of an economy, as it is fragile precisely because even adventure tourism offerings do not include being kidnapped, caught in crossfire, or the prospect of being blown up (Richter 1999). The statistical analysis of the number of tourist arrivals and other economic indicators show that the tourism market in Turkey has been affected by political instability and subsequent terror attacks. The impact of terrorism on tourism can be both direct and indirect. The direct costs of terrorism on the tourism sector include decreased tourist numbers, leading to decreased revenue and lower GDP, while indirect costs include

decreased employment in the tourism sector and reduced flow-on effects to other industries, such as food service, cleaning and maintenance businesses (IEP 2016). The differences in the development of countries with no terrorist attack and countries with terrorist attacks can be tracked by means of various economic indicators. For example, between 2008 and 2014, tourism and travel's average contribution to GDP growth in countries that had no terrorist attacks targeting tourists was 3.6 percent, while in countries where attacks deliberately targeted tourists it amounted to 1.9 per cent (IEP 2016). The aim of this paper is to analyze how political instability and terrorism is interrelated with tourist arrivals, and to identify their impact on the tourism industry. The study aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the economic and tourism indicators of Turkey, over the period from 2002 to 2015 and explore the interrelationship with the terrorism index to test the effect of terrorism and political instability on the tourism industry. The results reveal that there is the strong relationship between the changes in the terrorism index and overall tourism growth rates. Consequently, political conflict and terrorism can undoubtedly be said to have an adverse effect on Turkey's tourism development.

It is important to understand all the factors that influence and build destination image in the eye of potential tourists, especially for destinations in conflict-ridden areas which have much greater challenges. Since destinations are intangible products, customers rely heavily on their perceptions of alternative destinations when making their destination-choice decisions (Um–Crompton 1990). Destination image among potential tourists of conflict-ridden areas is significantly affected by international conflicts between countries affecting perceptions of the destination (Alvarez–Campo 2014). Perceptions related to Turkey have, among other things, been shaped by the coverage in the media of Turkish political and safety issues, including terrorism, instability in the political arena, Islamic fundamentalism, human rights concerns, the conflict with Greece over Cyprus, and the Turkish government's reaction to the allegations of Armenian genocide (Alvarez–Korzay 2008). In the case of Turkey, the conflict riven country seems to have been in continuous political crisis for many years, during which time conflict has escalated and been magnified through the media internationally. While the effect of some incidents and terrorist attacks may fade over time, continued conflict in the region may result in a permanent influence on both destination and destination image (Sönmez et al. 1999).

The research found that Turkey was one of six countries to display very significant deteriorations in their Global Terrorism Index (GTI) scores in 2015, leading to large changes in their ranking over the previous year (IEP 2016). These countries include; France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Tunisia and Burundi (IEP 2016). Indeed, OECD countries experienced substantial increases in terrorism, with Turkey and France being particularly affected, while Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden and Turkey recorded the most deaths from terrorism in a single year since 2000 (IEP 2016). However, the largest increase occurred in Turkey, where both ISIL and the

PKK became more active, resulting in the number of terrorism-related deaths rising from 20 in 2014 to 337 in 2015 (IEP 2016). Turkey is in fact the country that suffered the highest number of deaths from terrorism in the OECD since 2000, except for the September 11, 2001, attacks in the US (IEP 2016). There are studies showing that economic growth and terrorism have a negative relationship. Results from research by IEP (2016) on Turkey showed that terrorism had severe adverse effects on the economy when the economy was in an expansionary phase (IEP 2016).

The present study employs graph analysis to compare changes in growth rates of main tourism and economic indicators with changes in terrorism threat. In the first section, the growth of overall tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts over the period of 2002 and 2015 is presented by graph analysis. The effect of changes in terrorism index is illustrated by a comparison of the changes in international tourist arrivals, international tourism receipts, direct contribution to employment, direct contribution to GDP and overall GDP growth with the GTI growth rate. It is important for the country's destination managers to understand the real consequences of conflict and terrorism on the tourism industry, as tourism plays a significant role in the economy of Turkey, contributing substantially to the economy of the country. Consequently, the findings from the graph analysis in this study prove the significance of studying the effects of political conflict and terrorism on tourism in Turkey, while terrorism and conflict in the country challenge the competitiveness of Turkey's tourism development.

Considering the global context, conflict in one region or country, as well as terrorism, affects the tourism industry globally. There are several reasons why tourism growth in one geographic region is affected by negative events in other regions. Negative events related to conflict in one region threaten the growth of tourism well beyond that region's boundaries, resulting in significant decreases in the number of tourists from perceptions of risk. Hence, crisis and negative events within one region or a country may influence tourism growth globally. Neumayer's (2004) study revealed as a spill-over effect from political conflict, that tourists tend to visit neighbouring regions that offer a substitute to an affected destination with similar options and attractions, thus representing one positive influence on tourism growth. Consequently, negative events may also influence other tourism destinations positively. Generally, tourism studies support the general idea that while conflicts affect tourism in a destination negatively, a crisis in the region may have negative or positive effects on tourism growth to nearby destinations (Drakos–Kutan 2003, Neumayer 2004).

## 2. Literature review

Tourism as a constantly growing and one of the world's main industries is disrupted by political instability and terrorism. The threat of danger accompanied by these evils tends to impact demand from potential tourists and significantly impacts the flow of tourism (Sönmez 1998). World tourism is affected by the events and crises of an external environment, for instance, small conflicts have a considerable effect on a destination's image (Ritchie 2004). International conflicts between countries play a significant role in forming destination image since they affect the knowledge held by potential tourists of a destination (Alvarez-Campo 2014). Furthermore, various studies have shown that negative incidents in a region have a significant, detrimental impact on the tourism industry of that region (Clements-Georgiou 1998, Gartner-Shen 1992, Hall 2010, Rittichainawat-Chakraborty 2009, Thapa 2004).

The distinctions between and definitions of crisis and disaster have been important areas of discussion for many researchers. Faulkner (2001) made a distinction between crisis and disaster noting that crisis is a situation originating from within the organization, while disaster is a result of unpredictable catastrophic changes originating outside of the organization. The aim of this study, however, is to focus on crisis, as political conflict is caused by political issues. Nevertheless, the scale of a crisis should be considered in any such study. Parsons (1996) suggests three types of crises: (i) Immediate crises: where little or no warning exists, therefore, organizations are unable to research the problem or prepare contingency plans before the crisis hits, (ii) Emerging crises: these are slower in developing and may be able to be stopped or limited by organizational action, (iii) Sustained crises: that may last for weeks, months or even years. The crises in the study can be considered sustained crises, as they have been ongoing for many years. The type of control and strategies to deal with a different crisis will vary, depending on the consequences and time ratio (Ritchie 2004).

In the case of Turkey, continuous political crisis and terror attacks have been endemic for several decades, over which time conflict has escalated and been magnified through media reporting internationally. While the effect of some incidents and terrorist attacks may fade out given time, continuous conflicts in the region may result in permanent damage both to the destination and destination image (Sönmez et al. 1999). Recent studies have mainly focused on determining the effect of different specific events on destination image. However, this study tries to identify the effects of crisis on tourism, and to reveal their relationship.

Ritchie (2004) notes that studying crisis and disaster management for the tourism industry is difficult as the chaotic situations are usually unpredictable and difficult to control. However, it is still an important part of public and private sector management, which should be considered by tourism management (Ritchie 2004). Political instability or the outbreak of war in one part of the world can dramatically reduce tourist travel patterns to other parts of the world, as seen during the Gulf War of 1991

and the Iraq conflict in 2003, and consequently, tourism is highly susceptible to external factors and pressures in the wider operating environment (Ritchie 2004).

An understanding of the effect of terrorism and political instability on tourism numbers, and studying the relationship between these various dimensions before, after and during conflict, will contribute considerable theoretical knowledge of how tourism is changing in these countries, and how destination managers might apply this knowledge in practice to nurture tourist demand and maintain the growth of the industry in their respective economies.

Ritchie (2004) studied crisis management for the tourism industry from a strategic and holistic approach. According to Ritchie's (2004) notes, a strategic, holistic and proactive approach to crisis management should be implemented through (i) developing proactive scanning and planning, (ii) implementing strategies when crises or disasters occur, and (iii) evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies to ensure continual refinement of crisis management strategies. Our study follows the scanning component of the strategy to provide additional insights into the effects of political turmoil and terrorism, and to understand the change in economic indicators.

The study on the impact of political violence on tourism revealed that human rights violations, conflict, and other politically motivated violent events negatively affect tourist arrivals. In fact, even if autocratic regimes do not resort to violence, they have lower numbers of tourist arrivals than more democratic regimes, and are subject to intraregional, negative spillover, and cross-regional substitution effects (Neumayer 2004). It is suggested that sometimes it is difficult to realize the effects of a particular crisis on tourism, as it takes 3 to 9 months to see a drastic decrease in tourist arrivals, because tourist may not have a chance to change their existing travel bookings (Neumayer 2004). Tourists are sensitive to the negative image of a tourist destination, violent events often affecting a tourist destination long after the event has passed and stability has, in effect, been restored (Neumayer 2004). Depending on how sustained the period of crisis and the negative media coverage have been, it might take years for tourism to regain its previous level (Neumayer 2004).

To be successful in the tourism industry, considerable knowledge is required regarding the destination image as it is nurtured by potential tourists. Hence it is important to understand all the factors that influence and build destination image in the eye of potential tourists, especially in destinations in conflict-ridden areas, which face much greater challenges in this regard. Since destinations are intangible products, customers heavily rely on their images of alternative destinations when making their destination-choice decisions (Um–Crompton 1990). Understanding the image formation process in conflict-ridden areas, and the resulting tourist behavior, will lead to destination marketers building viable concepts, fully aware of destination image constructs and factors affecting the components of tourism destination image in conflict-ridden areas.

Another factor affecting the tourism decision-making process, and tourism demand as a consequence, is perceived risk. A study investigating perceived risk associated with international tourism using a random sample of US-born young adults revealed the seven risk factors: health, political instability, terrorism, strange food, cultural barriers, a nation's political and religious dogma, and crime (Lepp–Gibson 2003). Recently, tourism risk has become an important phenomenon, as evidenced by travelers' increasing attention to travel safety and travel risk. The concept of risk was first proposed by Bauer (1960) as part of consumer behavior, stating that, "consumer behavior involves risk in the sense that any action of a consumer will produce consequences which he cannot anticipate with anything approximating certainty, and some of which at least are likely to be unpleasant." Tourism risk perception is defined as a quantitative assessment of tourism security, and destination risk perception has a strong influence on tourist purchase intention (Cui et al. 2016). Tourism risk perception can be described as a judgment of tourists about the uncertainty of tourism activities and processes (Cui et al. 2016). In other words, tourism risk perception theory involves psychology, sociology, culture, economics and many other disciplines (Cui et al. 2016).

This literature review analyses certain, relevant political conflict and instability, and provides an understanding of the determinants and influencing factors in tourist demand for a destination. Hence, destination image formation process, tourists' risk perception and tourism numbers are all affected by crisis events in a particular country. There may be several factors affecting tourism growth and economic development in a country affected by violent events within its borders. Our aim is to analyse such negative events concentrating on political and social events (such as threats of disease, terrorism, political conflict, disasters) in Turkey, and to illustrate the changes that result by descriptive analysis. Such negative events in a region threaten the growth of tourism and lead to a significant decrease in the number of tourists as a result of perceptions of high-risk. Consequently, crises and negative events within one region may influence tourism growth in other regions.

### **3. Data and methods**

Descriptive analysis of the economic and tourism indicators of Turkey, over the period from 2002 to 2015 is used to analyze the effects of crisis in Turkey on its tourism development. Researching the effect of conflict on tourism and an economy is a complex area and requires comprehensive analysis. Indeed, a follow-up study is planned to include qualitative methods and in-depth quantitative analysis by bringing more influencing factors into the analysis. The reason for selecting descriptive analysis for this study was to provide preliminary research on the effects of conflict on the tourism industry in Turkey, and to illustrate their interplay with the help of graphical analysis. In this study, we present a graph analysis of the annual percentage growth rates of the main indicators in tourism. Annual percentage growth rates are

dimensionless measures of the amount of increase (or decrease) of a specific variable from one year to another in percentage terms (Claveria–Poluzzi 2016).

The study analyses the changes in growth rates of Turkey's economic indicators in comparison to Global Terrorism Index (GTI) as calculated by The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

GTI provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism over the last 16 years, covering the period from the beginning of 2000 to the end of 2015 (IEP 2016). The GTI defines terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation” (IEP 2016, p. 6).

The data covers the period from 2002 to 2015, and accordingly the available GTI score for Turkey covers the same period. Meanwhile, data on tourism and economic indicators from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Travel and Tourism Council, World Bank and Tourism statistics published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey are used. Tourism indicators include the number of international tourist arrivals (millions), tourism receipts (US\$ thousands), direct contribution to employment (% growth), direct contribution to employment (thousands), direct contribution to GDP (US\$ billions), GDP (% growth).

In this study, we conducted a graphical analysis of the evolution of the main variables between 2002 and 2015. Due to the lack of data for the years before 2002, we had to limit our graphs from 2002 to 2015. We calculated the growth rate in percentages of GTI in order to be able to compare with growth rates (%) of international tourist arrivals, tourism receipts, direct contribution to employment, direct contribution to GDP and GDP growth rate. In the graph analysis section, observations on changes in the main tourism statistics are graphically depicted to provide a precise and improved understanding of the topic for further development of the research.

The observed trends of growth rates of international tourism arrivals, tourism receipts, direct contribution to employment, direct contribution to GDP, and their possible relationship to the growth of GTI, provide a more thorough understanding of the topic. The results will allow us to develop further research questions to analyse the effects of political conflict and terrorism on tourism in Turkey and to assess how it challenges Turkey's tourism development with in-depth analysis. Consequently, the analysis used in this paper will assist researchers interested in conflict and its effect on tourism, and especially in Turkey, to gain further insight into the relationship of tourism and conflict, including terrorism and political conflict. Moreover, GTI and its relationship to tourism have not previously been considered in the research literature on tourism.

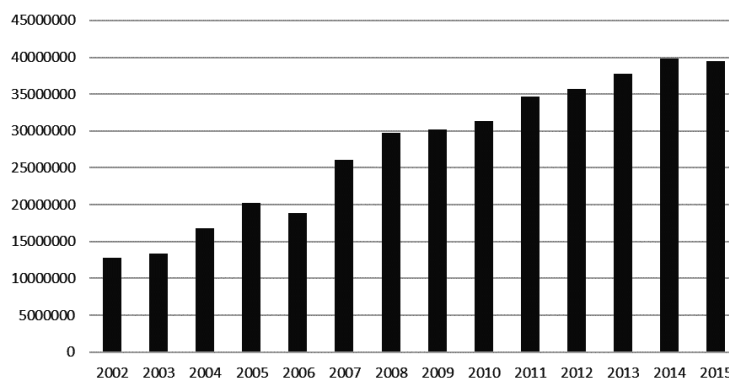
#### 4. Results

The following section presents the results of statistical analyses of main tourism indicators for Turkey over the period of 14 years, from 2002 to 2015. The graphical data analysis reflects the major trends in growth rates and their relationship with the GTI score of Turkey. It presents the following analytical findings: 1) the relationship of GTI score and the number of international tourist arrivals, 2) the relationship of GTI score and tourism receipts, 3) the relationship of GTI score and direct contribution to employment (% growth), 4) the relationship of GTI score and direct contribution to employment (thousands), 5) the relationship of GTI score and direct contribution to GDP (US\$ billions), and 6) the relationship of GTI score to GDP (% growth). These thematic sections of analysis are interrelated with each other and illustrate the effect of terrorism and political conflict on tourism competitiveness in Turkey. Moreover, the results suggest implications for future research development in this topic. The graphs and tables presented aim to provide information about the changes in tourism growth trends in Turkey, and to show where these changes were significant during the selected period.

Figure 1 shows the change in international tourist arrivals Turkey from 2002 to 2015. Overall, Turkey showed an increasing trend in the number of international tourist arrivals with slight fluctuations, however with changing annual growth rates. The lowest number of arrivals was in 2002 at around 11 million tourists, while the highest number of arrivals was in 2014 at 39 million tourists. The peak of international tourist arrivals was followed by a slight decrease in 2015. Nevertheless, Turkey maintains its position in the list of the world's top tourism destinations as measured by international tourist arrivals.

The overall illustration of tourism receipts for Turkey is depicted in Figure 2. Similar to tourism arrivals, tourism receipts also remained on an increasing trend over

*Figure 1* The number of international tourist arrivals in Turkey  
(number of overnight visitors)

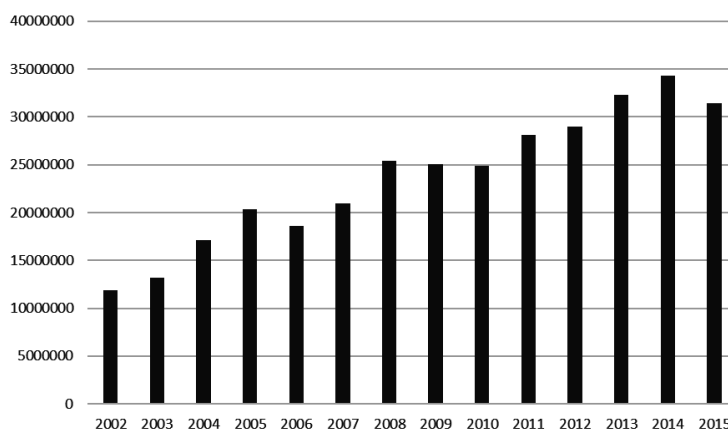


Source: UNWTO (2017)



the period overall, starting at around 11 billion US\$ and reaching approximately 34 billion US\$ in 2014. In the last four years investigated, from 2011 to 2015, international tourism receipts for Turkey remained stable at around 30 billion US\$.

*Figure 2* International tourism receipts of Turkey (US\$ in thousands)



*Source:* UNWTO (2017)

The GTI scores of Turkey provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace (Table 1) show that terrorism was a real threat in the country over the entire period. The GTI score for Turkey had long hovered around 5. In 2002, it reached its lowest score for terrorism at 4.62. However, the score for terrorism kept rising, reaching its highest value in 2015 due to several incidents in the country, at 6.74 GTI score. The overall trend of GTI scores indicates that Turkey is a relevant case in point to study the effects of terrorism and political conflict on the tourism industry.

*Table 1* Global Terrorism Index of Turkey, 2002-2015

<b>Years</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
GTI	4.62	5.7	5.46	5.49	5.63	5.38	5.55
<b>Years</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
GTI	5.23	4.98	5.22	6.05	5.88	5.74	6.74

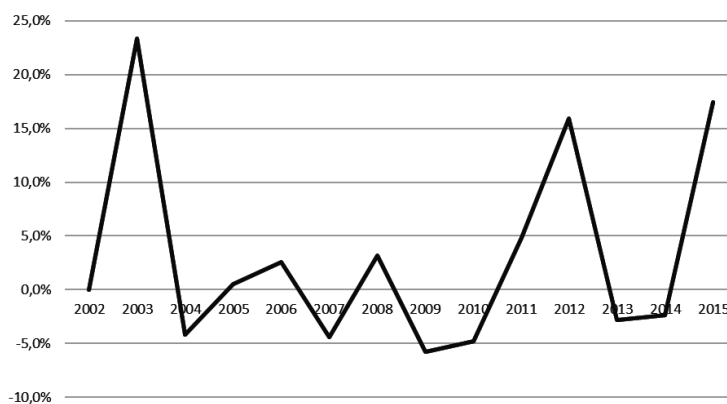
*Source:* IEP

We calculated annual percentage growth rates for GTI, and accordingly, the amount of increase (or decrease) from one year to another in percentage terms as illustrated in Figure 3. Significant growth rates in terrorism index are observed in 2003, 2012, 2015, with 23.4%, 15.9% and 17.4% growth respectively.

Figure 4 compares GTI growth rate with GDP growth rate of Turkey from 2002 to 2015. It can be observed that when there is a sharp increase in the GTI score, GDP growth rates show decline. However, in some cases, the indicated trend is not observed, for instance in 2009. We can observe that GTI score and GDP score both dropped simultaneously in 2009. However, the decline in GDP in 2009 can be related to the consequences of the global financial crisis in 2008. If we exclude the exception of the consequences of the global financial crisis, it can be claimed that GDP growth is positively affected by a decline in terrorism index, while it is negatively affected by an increase in terrorism index. Tourism has a positive impact on economic growth and development, as it generates employment and income, leads to a positive tourism balance of payments, stimulates tourism's supply sectors and leads to a generally increased level of economic activity in the country (Ivanov–Webster 2007). It is also accepted that tourism can have an impact on economic activity (Dwyer et al. 2004). Indeed, tourism has an impact on the most frequently used quantitative measure of economic development, gross domestic product (GDP) (Ivanov–Webster 2007). However, the relationship between tourism and GDP growth deserves broader analysis. In fact, changes in tourism's share in GDP can also be interpreted as the result of changes in other industries (Ivanov–Webster 2007). However, in general, our study confirms that tourism provides stimulation to economic growth.

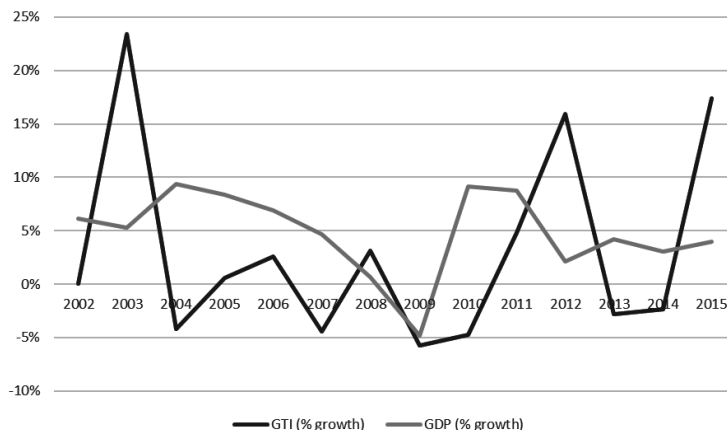
The comparison of global terrorism index (growth %) and the number of arrivals (% growth) in Turkey (Figure 5) reveals that there is a relationship between the two indicators. During the period of low GTI score, the number of international tourism arrivals shows high growth rates. Similar to GDP growth rates, the number of international tourism arrivals shows different trends during the global financial crisis

*Figure 3 Global Terrorism Index (growth %) of Turkey*



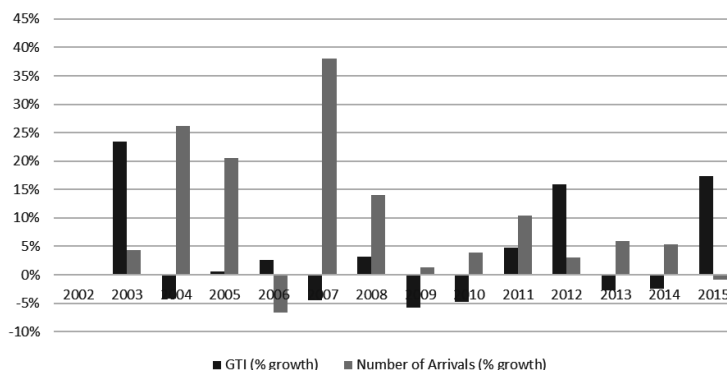
Source: IEP (2016)

*Figure 4* The comparison of Global Terrorism Index growth rate and GDP growth rate in Turkey, 2002-2015



*Source:* own construction based on IEP (2016) and World Bank (2017) data

*Figure 5* The comparison of Global Terrorism Index growth rate and growth of arrivals in Turkey

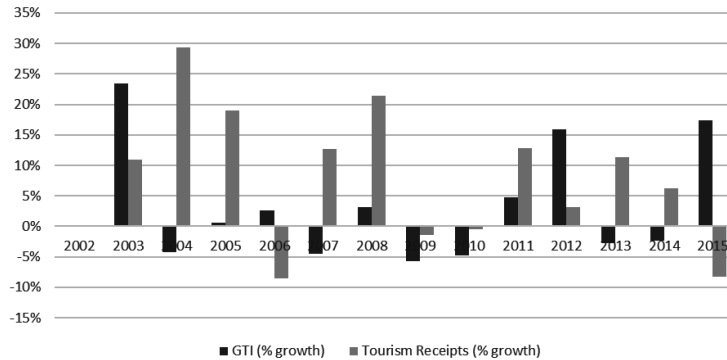


*Source:* own construction based on IEP (2016) and UNWTO (2017) data

period. Still, we may emphasise that there is a positive relationship between the number of international tourist arrivals with low or negative GTI growth rate.

Figure 6 illustrates the same trend for the comparison of global terrorism index (growth %) and tourism receipts (% growth) in Turkey as the growth trend analysis of the number of arrivals. A drop in GTI score leads to a higher growth rate in tourism receipts. In contrast, increase in the GTI score leads to a decline in growth rates of

*Figure 6* The comparison of Global Terrorism Index (growth %) and Tourism Receipts (% growth) in Turkey

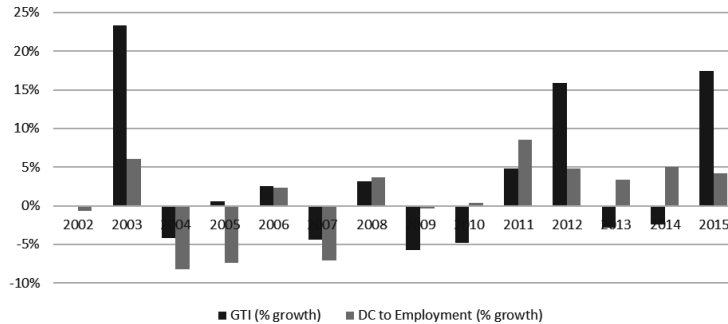


*Source:* own construction based on IEP (2016) and UNWTO (2017) data

tourism receipts in Turkey. Again, the trend is not borne out in 2009 and 2010, due to the consequences of the 2008 global financial crisis. The results of the analysis shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 forms a solid basis for in-depth analysis of the effect of terrorism on Turkish tourism, as it shows a relationship between GTI scores and tourism indicators. However, the observed changes are limited to immediate effects, and still further analysis is required to compare the delayed effects. As suggested by Neumayer (2004), sometimes it is difficult to appreciate the effects of a particular crisis on tourism, as it takes 3 to 9 months to see a drastic decrease in tourist arrivals, because many tourists may not have the chance to change their existing travel arrangements.

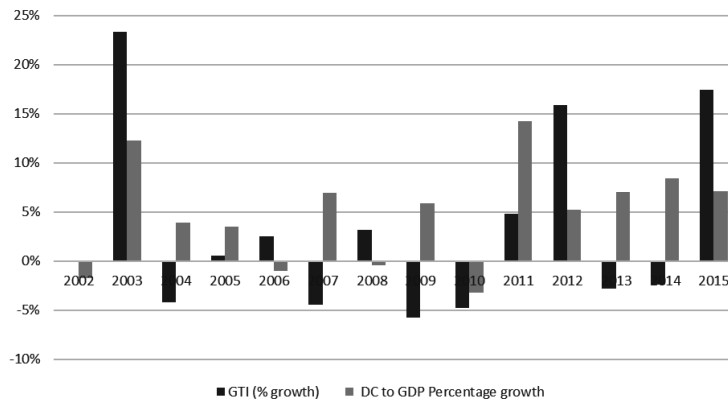
The comparison of global terrorism index (growth %) and direct contribution to employment (% growth) in Turkey (Figure 7) does not reveal any significant trend. Terrorism may have no direct impact on employment in Turkey, or the effect is not immediate. However, the comparison of global terrorism index (growth %) and direct contribution to GDP (% growth) in Turkey shows signs of correlation (Figure 8). The highest growth rates of direct contribution to GDP are observed during periods of lower or negative GTI growth rates. During a period of higher GTI growth rates, the direct contribution to GDP growth rates tends to decline.

*Figure 7* The comparison of Global Terrorism Index growth rate and the growth rate of Direct Contribution to Employment in Turkey



*Source:* own construction based on IEP (2016) and WTCC (2017) data

*Figure 8* The comparison of Global Terrorism Index (growth %) and Direct Contribution to GDP (% growth) in Turkey



*Source:* own construction based on IEP (2016) and WTCC (2017) data

## 5. Conclusion

This study applies graph analysis of major tourism indicators, and compares their growth rates with global terrorism index to shed light on the effects of terrorism and political conflict on the tourism industry in Turkey. The findings confirm the existing effect of terrorism in tourism flows, tourism receipts, direct contribution to GDP, and as well as on the GDP of Turkey in particular. It is observed that a rising trend in global terrorism index leads to a decline in the main tourism indicators, while, the

decline in global terrorism index of the country leads to improvements of main tourism indicators. However, we were able to observe a significant, direct contribution of tourism to employment in Turkey when compared with the GTI growth rate. In addition, it should be emphasised that international tourism arrivals and international tourism receipts in Turkey showed increasing trends from 2002 to 2015 with some fluctuations. However, the growth rates over the period were significantly different. Overall, the persistently high GTI score of Turkey for many years and observed relationship between GTI scores and main tourism indicators make Turkey an important subject for studying the effect of conflict and terrorism on tourism.

The findings from the graph analysis in this study have highlighted the significance of researching the effects of political conflict and terrorism on tourism. It is observed that terrorism and conflict in the country challenge the competitiveness of Turkey's tourism industry among its competitors. It is obvious that tourism plays a significant role in the economy of Turkey, and it has a substantial economic contribution to the country. Consequently, it is important for the country's destination managers to understand the real consequences of conflict and terrorism on the tourism industry. Furthermore, it will be vital to determine the factors and other indirect effects of conflict and terrorism on the country to create effective tools to eliminate or minimize negative consequences.

## **6. Further research and limitations**

There are several important suggestions for future implications and further research in this topic. The effects of terrorism on tourism should be seriously considered in tourism planning. Moreover, while the study focused on the main tourism indicators of a country, the effects on different sub-sectors of the tourism industry and each region may respond differently, and should be studied separately. The index used to define the level of conflict and terrorism in Turkey was global terrorism index, as presented by the Institute for Economics and Peace. More measurements of terrorism and conflict should be added to the research to better appreciate the problem and provide more insight to destination managers. Consequently, new trends require the addition of new attributes to the measurement methods used, and the development of new concepts in approaching tourism in conflict-ridden regions.

Some other limitations of the study should be noted. The data for GTI scores of Turkey was available only from 2002. However, more information regarding the level of conflict and terrorism in the country would be required to validate the patterns observed, and to conduct more detailed and in-depth analysis of the effects of political conflict and terrorism on tourism. Meanwhile, the literature in the field of tourism and hospitality is still limited. Therefore, more studies are needed in this area to provide further insights into how terrorism effects tourist figures. Our research was limited only to the analysis of the immediate effects of recent negative events in Turkey.

Future research should go on to investigate the delayed effects of terrorism on tourism growth with a combination of qualitative research methodologies.

Our research focused only on local conflict in Turkey and their effect on tourism growth of this destination. However, the effects of negative events and conflicts in other regions were not included in the research. As Turkey is among the top tourism destinations in the world, tourism growth in the country is affected by global events such as 9/11 in 2001, the global financial crisis, the Arab Spring, and the ongoing crisis in the Middle-East. Adding the effects of global crises in future studies will contribute greatly to the understanding of the relationship between tourism and economic growth.

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